

OTHER NOTICES

Elton, Charles S. *The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants*. London, 1958. Methuen. Pp. 181. Price 30s.

THE INFLUENCE of Charles Elton upon the development both of ecological theory and of ecological studies has been immense and wholly admirable. In this latest book he places us still further in his debt. His theme is the invasions, or outbursts, of foreign species when introduced into a new environment. The introduction has often been the result of human activity, whether deliberate or accidental. A population outburst seems to occur the more easily in environments where the already present species are naturally few, as, for example, on oceanic islands, or where mankind's recent activities have diminished the numbers of the originally competing species. The chapters on "The Reasons for Conservation" and "The Conservation of Variety" are particularly rewarding.

Elton here does not in fact, as he well might have done, enlarge upon the present population surge of our own species, though he has much to say that is highly relevant and instructive. His ideas and his allusions are always stimulating. For example, "Once the notion is grasped that complexity of population is a property of the community, to be studied and used in conservation, there is hardly any limit to the ways in which it could be introduced". And again, in reference to the varied efficacy and influence of chemical pesticides, "the new one left the scale insects unharmed, while destroying its enemy and parasite, thus proving again the value of the old Chinese proverb that 'there is no economy in going to bed early to save candles if the result be twins'".

G. C. L. B.

F.A.O./U.N. *The State of Food and Agriculture, 1958*. Rome, 1958. F.A.O./U.N. Pp. x + 222. Price 12s. 6d. (U.S. \$2.50).

THIS ANNUAL PRODUCTION has been prepared from the information reaching the Food and Agricultural Organization's headquarters up

to the last day of June 1958. As was stated in a comparable note a year ago "to the reader of the REVIEW the central point of interest is, as it were, the year's communique on the war between population and food supplies". After some slight advance, when for a few years world agricultural production was believed to have increased at the rate of about 3 per cent annually, or rather more than 1 per cent faster than the growth of world population, now there is both more reticence and disappointment. Indeed this latest issue seems not to wish plainly to relate supplies to the actual number of persons who need the food and other products of the soils and waters of the globe.

Two short quotations from the Summary and the Foreword will suffice to present the most recent picture.

The year 1957-58 saw the first check in the steady expansion of world agricultural production since the war, and the preliminary FAO index of world agricultural production (average 1952-53 = 100) fell back to 119 against 120 in the previous year. World per caput agricultural production declined from 109 in 1956-57 to 107 in 1957-58. The output of the world's fisheries and forests was also slightly lower in 1957-58 than the year before.

The paradoxical situation has arisen that in the more developed countries, where supplies are already abundant or overabundant, technical progress had made possible a further rapid expansion of output if markets for larger supplies could be found. On the other hand, in the less developed countries, where demand is increasing rapidly with the fast growth of population and rising standards of living, agricultural expansion is more difficult because of more primitive techniques, lack of investment capital and often unsuitable systems of land tenure and other institutions. The report suggests that these disparities have often been increased by the agricultural price policies of the two groups of countries.

The bulk of the whole Report is made up of the usual "World Review and Outlook", together with two special features, this year on "Food and Agricultural Developments in Africa South of the Sahara" and "The Growth of Forest Industries and their Impact on the World's Forests".

G. C. L. B.

Manual of Demographic Statistics in Japan. Tokyo, 1958. Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. Pp. 250.

IN THE PAST SIX YEARS, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO has freely distributed a number of publications on population questions with a view to promoting international exchanges of information on these subjects. The present volume is concerned mainly with providing an account, in English, of the history and present-day organisation of censuses and vital registration in Japan; in this it is very successful and the text is of great interest. It also gives much useful information about the past, present and probable future of the population itself and includes a short chapter on current problems and how they are being met.

Japan, the manual says, still relies more upon its own agriculture than do Western countries of similarly high population density; the result is an intensive and diligent way of cultivation. Such cultivation has already reached the stage of maximum development, as is illustrated by the fact that the number of persons engaged on the land has remained almost constant since the nineteenth century. Considerable efforts are therefore being made to expand industrial productivity. As progress in this aim has been hardly rapid enough to match population growth, and as emigration is very restricted, birth control has become widespread. Whatever the means by which it is achieved, this is now so effective in reducing growth that a "projection" of future population published in 1957 shows the total numbers as rising from the present level of 90 millions to a peak of 105 millions by 1985 and thereafter falling to 90 millions again by the year 2015. Thus although the present very uncomfortable situation may well worsen, at least some upper limit to the nation's demographic difficulties can be foreseen.

Methods of birth control are not discussed and nothing is said on the subject of abortion.

P. R. C.

Roberts, D. F. and Weiner, J. S. (Editors). *The Scope of Physical Anthropology and its Place in Academic Studies.* Oxford, 1958. The Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research

for the Society for the Study of Human Biology. Institute of Biology. Pp. 64. Price 3s.

THIS FASCINATING, slim volume is a reprint of the papers read at a Symposium held at the Ciba Foundation in November 1957 under the title "The scope of physical anthropology and human population biology, and their place in academic studies". The audience was an invited one and Dr. J. A. Fraser Roberts and Dr. K. P. Oakley took the Chair in turn.

Readers of the REVIEW will perhaps turn first to L. S. Penrose's "Human Variability and Adaptability" which ends with the sentence: "A new and broader idea of human polymorphism will be required before anthropologists can play their full part in human race genetics, into which their subject must, in my view, be to a large extent inevitably transformed".

Other authors included are W. E. Le Gros Clark, A. C. Stevenson, J. Z. Young, A. E. Mourant, N. A. Barnicot, J. S. Weiner, K. P. Oakley and J. M. Tanner. With so varied, and may one say sprightly, an assortment of authorities, the result is expectedly of great interest. Tanner reaches down to the fundamentals in his paper on "The Place of Human Biology in Medical Education. . . ."

Sir Solly Zuckerman summarized the proceedings in a brief and characteristic contribution. "If our subject is to become an autonomous discipline, it must become professional; it must get rid of the slight tarnish of amateurism." He concluded with a special plea that students be taught to be experimentally minded.

G. C. L. B.

World Health Organization. *Malaria Eradication: A Plea for Health.* Geneva, 1958. W.H.O. Pp. 12.

In man's endless struggle for a healthier life, to free the world from the ancient scourge of malaria would be a great victory. . . . The disease has striking repercussions on economic production and social progress in under-developed countries. . . .

As recently as 1955 [malaria] was striking each year 200 million people and causing two million deaths. . . . Malaria is the world's greatest single cause of disablement.

THE STORY is well told in summary form; eradication is a genuine possibility; the suffering and

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wastefulness are great; the urgency is real to extend the campaigns of eradication with speed and vigour before still more strains of the mosquito vectors develop resistance to the commonly used insecticides. The assessed costs to 1962 would be U.S. \$48,512,835. "These sums will make possible . . . the mobilization of a dynamic army of administrators, malariologists, entomologists, various other experts, technicians, etc., to fight with devotion and determination against the ancient curse of malaria".

So far so altruistically utopian. The very calculation of costs, down to the unit dollar in near 50 million, underlines the world's dilemma and lack of realism. If but a fraction of the money, so to be worthily expended, could be diverted to the other side of the picture, to the problems of excessive production of human souls, then perhaps the better life for all may move from the realms of hope to eventual possibility.

G. C. L. B.

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